15

Universal Christian Charity,

As Comprehending all

True Religion and Happiness.

Demonstrated from

E.11.64

Scripture and Reason,

IN A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

Lord Chief Justice Treby.

AT THE

BIBL. CANT. ACAD.

ASSIZES held at Maidstone *in* Kent, March *the* 17th. 1696.

By Tho. Watts Vicar of *Orpington*, and St. *Mary Cray*.

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To his ever Honour'd

Friends, Benefactors, and Loving Neighbours.

NOT to inſiſt upon the Publick Approbation wherewith this Diſcourſe was Honour'd; nor the many particular Engagements lying on me, thus to appear, and under ſo general a Dedication: In Gratitude to you, whoſe Beneficent Examples, give life to the Doctrines aſſerted, I would only thus far declare to the World thereupon; that where-ever any Obligation lies upon a Man, Common Honeſty leads him to pay the Debt; ſo may this be accepted as an honeſt Inſtance of my Duty and Thankfulneſs; tho' it is impoſſible for me, according to my ſmall Talent, to diſcharge the total Summ; Yet would I make this Publick Acknowledgments to be Juſt and Thankful: For the Apoſtle makes Ingratitude the Compendium of all Impiety, in 2 Tim. 3. 2. Theſe two words, Unthankful, Unholy. And tho' in general all Men, who receive Favours, ought to be Thankful; yet certainly every ſingle Perſon has as much right to chuſe the way of expreſſing his Thanks, as he has a

Propriety to his Complexion, and Fortunes. Moreover, the trueſt Notion of Gratitude, is never to give real occaſion that our Benefactor ſhould Repent that he beſtowed his Benefit upon us.

Now, as I would thus live, and behave my ſelf to my Friends; ſo would I give none any juſt occaſion to become mine Enemies; but yet, we muſt look for Tribulation in an uncharitable World, and Peace only in Chriſt; and not expect to fare better than himſelf, and his Apoſtles, and the beſt Chriſtians did here: How Innocent, Peaceable, or Beneficent ſoever we may be, we ſhall meet with Foes in abundance, and be ever Perſecuted with the Virulent Tongues, or Malicous Deeds of Selfiſh, Moroſs, Proud, Ill natur'd, Angry Wretches, whom I do heartily Pity and Pray for; as even thoſe, who can Prophanely trample upon things Sacred, Proudly Inſult over their Spiritual Guides, and Hipocritically Devour, or Sacrilegiouſly Invade the Churches Patrimony, which Jews and Heathens have abhorr'd to do. How Conſtantly and Faithfully ſoever we ſow our Spiritual things, in greateſt Charity to Mens Souls; yet are we deny'd the Grateful, Juſt, and Meaneſt Returns, and baſely accounted Mens Enemies for telling them the Truth. But of you my Friends, have I happily Experienc'd better: As Charity is your Glory, and will be your Reward. So Prayeth your moſt Obliged Orator,

T. W.

A SERMON.

1 Cor. XIII. 13.

And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity; these three: But the greatest of these is Charity.

THis Text, which affords such useful Meditations for all times, may not improperly be consider'd upon this occasion, and in this our solemn Lent-Season; as it concludes St. *Paul's* most Noble Description of the sublimest Grace, and compleatest Vertue, in a whole Chapter which begins with very great and surprizing Assertions, shewing, that all Gifts, how excellent soever, are nothing worth without Charity, to *Verse* 4. where by Charity must certainly be understood that grand Principle of true sincere Love both to God and

and Man, reſiding in our Hearts, enlivening our Souls, purifying our Deſires, ſeaſoning our Intentions, and influencing all our Words and Actions; without which, we can neither think, ſpeak, or do any thing, that will deſerve the Name of pious, good, or vertuous, nor ever become real Chriſtians: Therefore the Apoſtle inſtanceth in theſe extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, which God was pleas'd to beſtow upon his Church in the Firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, *Verſe* 1, 2. *Though I ſpeak with the Tongues of Men, and of Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as ſounding Braſs, or a tinkling Cimbal.* The Gift of Utterance (equal at leaſt to the Angelical, and far exceeding all humane Eloquence) were the Apoſtles firſt endow'd with, when the Holy Ghoſt actually deſcended upon *them* in *Cloven Tongues, like as of Fire*, Acts 2. 3. wherewith St. *Peter* converted 3000 Souls in his firſt powerful Sermon, *Verſe* 41. which otherwiſe had been no better than a loud and inſignificant noiſe, without the charitable Deſign and Endeavour of Converſion: And what better are the wittieſt Sayings, the moſt elegant Speeches, or higheſt Strains of Rhetorick, without Intention of Good? 'Tis the Charity expreſs'd in the Angel's happy Meſſage to the bleſſed Virgin, that makes his Salutation renown'd, *Luk.* 1. 28. Some Perſons may pleaſe their Humours with nauſeous Flattery, others ſatisfie their idle Fancies with meer Flouriſhes, or tingle their itching Ears with Clamours; and ſuch may raiſe Pyramids to their Orators, given them an aiery Exaltation in a popular Vogue: But how ridiculous and empty is all that, whereby neither the Speakers aim at, nor the Hearers receive any Benefit. What ſignifies the moſt Learned Harangues, or florid Panegyricks? And what

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leſs the windy Sounds, Groans, and Acclamations, to rouſe up Peoples Affections, and ſet them a-gazing, when their Underſtandings are no ways improv'd, nor their Wills rectify'd; while all they are taught, lye only floating on the Surface of the Brain, having no Root, nor Foundation lower; nothing deep enough laid for the Glorious Building upon the Heart, in Chriſtian Edification through Love. *Eph.* 4. 16. So farther ſays the Apoſtle; and *tho' I have the Gift of Prophecy, and underſtand all Myſteries, and all Knowledge; and tho' I have all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains, and have no Charity, I am nothing.* Thus Prophecy, and the deepeſt Knowledge in the Myſteries of Religion, and the Glorious Power of working Miracles, were in themſelves of no more Account than the other; unleſs well us'd to a good end; unleſs tending purely to God's Glory, and the Salvation of Souls; otherwiſe they that have propheſied, and caſt out Devils, or done many wonderful Works in Chriſt's Name, ſhall be caſt off at laſt among the Workers of Iniquity, *Matth.* 7. 22, 23. Whoſe beſt Actions are corrupted through By-ends, Falſe Principles, or Vanity. As again, *Verſe* 3. *And tho' I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor; and though I give my Body to be burned, and have no Charity, it profiteth me nothing.* Here St. *Paul* aſſerts the ſame concerning the greateſt Liberality to the Poor, and Martyrdom it ſelf, the laying down our very Lives, which ſeems to be the utmoſt that can poſſibly be requir'd of us upon any occaſion; the greateſt Love imaginable, as may be ſuppos'd from that noted Text, *Joh.* 15. 13. But yet here it is manifeſtly imply'd, (as a late pious Biſhop obſerv'd hereupon) that a Man may part with his whole Eſtate, and his Life too;

too; and yet that he may want Charity. This may ſeem a very ſtrange and ſurprizing Suppoſition to us, who can ſee no farther than the bare outſide and appearances of Things; but God, who is intimately acquainted with all the ſecret Motions and Imaginations of the Heart, knows, that too often the moſt ſpecious external Acts may proceed from a falſe, or corrupt Principle; and then, tho' they may be highly eſteem'd and magnify'd in the Opinion of the World, they cannot be acceptable to him, who is pleas'd with nothing that does not flow from a ſincere and truly pious Diſpoſition of the Soul: From that Charity, which ariſes from the Love of God; which loves him as the Supreme and Original Good, and loves every thing elſe for his ſake; that admires and adores his infinite Fulneſs, and eſteems other things as the Streams and Emanations from that inexhauſtible Fountain. When we have not a due regard to this Heavenly Standard of our Affections, our Love will quickly degenerate into a ſilly Fondneſs, or a covetous Deſire, or ſome turbulent, uneaſie, violent, or exorbitant Paſſion. But when the Love of God rules in our Hearts; when it preſides over our very Thoughts, and governs the moſt ſecret and inward Motions of our Spirits; it will keep all ſteddy and even, in a due Compoſure, without any Exceſs or Irregularity; and I may add, in a conſtant readineſs to do good. Now this is that excellent Principle of Charity, which is only able to give any real Value to all other Endowments whatever; and which accordingly is deſcribed in the next place by ſome of the moſt genuine and proper Effects of it, to *Verſe* 8. as that it *ſuffereth long*; that it *is kind*, that it *envieth not*, *vaunteth not it ſelf*, or is not raſh; *is not puffed*

puffed up, doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly; ſeeketh not her own, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no Evil, rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth, or with *the Truth*: *Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*: Thus it includes Patience, Benificence, Contentment, Humility, Decency, Generoſity, Publick-Spiritedneſs, Meekneſs, Temperance, Good Nature, Piety, Devotion, Truth, Fidelity, Joy, and Compaſſion, Peace and Union, Faith, Hope, and the braveſt Chriſtian Fortitude, with all the bleſſed Fruits of the Holy Spirit; yea, with all manner of Goodneſs and Morality, to make us both truly wiſe and happy. So next, St. *Paul* commends it from its duration, becauſe that all the other Gifts and Abilities, how neceſſary ſoever they might be for the propagation of the Chriſtian Religion, *&c.* ſhould yet fail, ceaſe, and vaniſh away, as things that ſhould be of no farther uſe in the other World: But this alone ſhould never fail, but continue with us for ever in that Bleſſed State of Happineſs and Perfection, as you may read to my Text, wherein now laſtly our Apoſtle mentions the three moſt eminent Graces *Faith, Hope, and Charity*; but gives the preference to the laſt, concluding poſitively, *the greateſt of theſe is Charity*; which is evident from the whole *Chapter*, as we have thus far briefly conſider'd it: From whence now to proceed methodically, I ſhall,

Firſt, illuſtrate the Words of my Text in ſhort.

Secondly, Endeavour to demonſtrate to you this excellent Grace of Charity, as comprehenſive of all True Religion

ligion and Happineſs, from Scripture and Reaſon together. And ſo,

Thirdly, I ſhall manifeſt ſome grand Obligations to the due Practice thereof, from the Points of Duty, Gratitude, and Intereſt.

Firſt, Then conſider the Juſt ſhall live by Faith, *Heb.* 2. 4. *Rom.* 1. 17. *We are purify'd, ſanctify'd, juſtify'd, and ſaved by Faith*, Acts 15. 9. c. 26, 18. Rom. 5. 1. Eph. 2. 8. But then it muſt be ſuch a Faith as worketh through Love: Nothing elſe availing in Jeſus Chriſt, *Gal.* 5. 6. *Hope is an Anchor of the Soul both ſure and ſtedfaſt*, Heb. 6. 19. And by Hope are we comforted and ſaved, *Rom.* 8. 24. For this were the Scriptures given, that we might have hope, *Rom.* 15. 4. which worketh Patience, and Aſſurance unto Life Eternal, *Tit.* 2. 13. c. 3, 7. Among our Spiritual Armour we are to take *for an Helmet the hope of Salvation*, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 8. This is our rejoicing, and will be our Glory in the Lord, *Col.* 1. 27. *Heb.* 3. 6. But yet this muſt be grounded and rooted in Love; and he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf, even as God is pure; to be like him in ſingular Love above all, as becometh his Sons, 1 *Joh.* 3. 1, 2, 3. Again, *Faith is the Subſtance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not ſeen*, Heb. 11. 1. which gives us all Aſſurance, and ſome Enjoyment of Heaven upon Earth; affords us ſome Antepaſts of Life and Glory. But here they end at the Celeſtial Gate; here is the Accompliſhment of our Faith and Hope, while Charity, the very Bond of Perfectneſs, uniteth us to the moſt Amiable the Divine Nature; while Love wings our Souls into

into the Regions of Bliſs and Immortality, abides with us there, and happily employs us unto all Eternity. Thus Charity is the greateſt of all Graces and Vertues, as influencing, and perfecting all, neareſt reſembling the Supreme Deity, and glorifying our Natures. *For Love is of God, and God is Love*, 1 Joh. 4. 7. *But he that loveth not, knoweth not God*, Verſe 8. How can ſuch then hope for Heaven? Or (like the bold Fiduciary) preſume upon Faith, which only worketh by, and is dead, and ineffectual without Love, *Jam.* 2. 3, 4. Love, which is the Light that ſhines before Men to the Glory of our Heavenly Father in all good Works, *Matth.* 5. 16. *Love*, which *is the fulfilling of the Law*, Rom. 13. 10. and the New Commandment of the Goſpel, *Joh.* 13. 34. The true, Spirit of all, the very diſtinguiſhing Badge, Cognizance and Characteriſtick of Chriſt's true Diſciples. Which now ſecondly, with all that has hitherto been ſaid, may be a ſufficient Demonſtration of the Comprehenſiveneſs of this excellent unbounded, univerſal, beatifying Chriſtian Charity: Whereto both Scripture and Reaſon give ſuch ample, undeniable Teſtimonies, as may yet farther appear from many clean convincing Proofs.

As there is ſuch an Uniformity, and happy Agreement between the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, that the one ſeems to be but the Counter-part of the other; or rather the *Goſpel* is both the Improvement and Fulfilling of the *Law*; and an higher advancement of Human Nature than ever it was bleſs'd with, either by its own Light, or preceding Revelation. So they all concenter together in this one Grace of Charity, which carries its own Reward with it in a much more real Senſe than the beſt Philoſophers held of Vertue. This Charity implies the whole of Man, both

his Duty and Happineſs, which the Royal wiſe Preacher concludes with the Fear of God, and keeping his Commandments, ſo to be prepared for future Judgment *Eccl.* 12. 13, 14. And what is all this, but the plain Effect, and ſure Demonſtration of our Love; which our Lord ſo poſitively requires of us, *John* 14 15. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* In this therefore does he ſumm up all the Law, and the Prophets, from *Deut.* 6. 5. *c.* 10, 12, 13. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy mind.* This is the firſt and great Commandment. And the ſecond (from *Lev.* 19. 18.) is like unto it, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf,* Matth. 22. 37, 38, 39, 40. Luke 10. 27. This is more than all the plain Hecatombs, *than all the whole Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices,* Mark 12. 33. Thus Love or Charity includes both all our Divine and Moral Duties; and makes us moſt like, and acceptable unto God, who is good to all, both Juſt and Unjuſt, whoſe infinite Perfection herein, we may happily imitate, and particularly as our Saviour directs us in his great and admirable improvements of the Law, *Matth.* 5. *To love our Enemies, bleſs them that curſe us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe us, and perſecute us,* v. 44. upon reaſons following to the end. So has he taught us to Pray, and to forgive others; or elſe we muſt never expect God's forgiveneſs our ſelves, *Matth.* 6. 14.

And ſo has he ſhewn us, in the Parable of the good *Samaritan,* to take every one for our Neighbour that needeth our Mercy, *Luke* 10. 30. to v. 38. Whereupon farther, we are aſſur'd of obtaining Mercy, as we are Merciful, in imitation of our Heavenly Father, *Matth.* 5. 7. *Luke* 6. 36 This is that Charity that will cover a multitude of ſins.

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Which makes St. *Peter* exhort us ſo earneſtly, *above all things to have fervent Charity*, &c. 1 *Pet.* 4, 8, 9. This is the very Life and Soul of Chriſtianity: This is that ſolid Principle, which goes through all, connecting the Duty and Beatitude together, as may be manifeſt entirely from our Saviours moſt excellent Sermon upon the Mount, *Matth.* 5. 6, 7, *&c.* Wherefore this muſt guide and influence our whole Lives and Converſations, as we deſire to be Wiſe, Good and Happy.

In ſhort, this Charity is in Religion, like the Rational Soul in the Body, (as *Ariſtotle* defines it) *Tota in toto, & tota in qualibet parte*, Entire in the whole, and undivided in every Part and Duty; which our uniform conſtant Obedience to the Divine Commands, will clearly alone demonſtrate: For the inſeperable effect of true Love, *is to work an identity of Volition*, as the Schools ſpeak, *i. e.* to conform our Wills to the Will of the Perſon that we love. Now the Will of our God and Saviour, is contain'd in his Laws and Precepts, which are to it as the Copy to the Original. So our due obſervance thereof, does infallibly imply our Love: For the neceſſary effect of a Cauſe, will of neceſſity follow the being of the true End. 'Tis upon this Suppoſition, that we our ſelves expect the ſame ſatisfaction.

All the Formalities of Reſpect, and other Offices of Friendſhip, we account but as ſo many deſigns upon us, where this Love is wanting: In like manner all other Expreſſions of our Love to God, tho' never ſo plauſible to the outward view, without this natural demonſtrative effect in keeping his Commandments thereupon, are but mere Flattery and Colluſion, and have no other intrinſick Vertue or Goodneſs in them, than as they

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are means to this end, and lead us to the Obedience and Obſervance of his Laws; as true Love certainly will; which the common Notions of Mankind can evince, from more particular Effects and Properties of Love: whereof hereafter. And to give you ſome brief agreeable Inſtances of Duties, both Relative and Perſonal; which, both Reaſon and Experience will declare the happineſs attending, as nothing's more delightful and eaſie in Practice. For the pleaſure and eaſe of a thing, reſults from the agreement between it and the deſire; which if we conſider narrowly in this caſe, we ſhall find, that nothing can be more adapted, than the Duties of Religion to our very Make and Conſtitution, and to our ſtrong impulſes after Happineſs. Nor is any thing (I'm ſure) more conſonant to the beſt parts of us, more advancive of our Natures, and more certainly purſuant of our trueſt Intereſts, both Temporal and Eternal. This made the wiſeſt of Men (upon its Knowledge and good Experience) thus pronounce of that Wiſdom, or Religion, which he ſo much recommends above all things: *Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace,* Prov. 3. 17. and of this we are aſſur'd by a greater than *Solomon*, our gracious Lord and loving Maſter himſelf, thus encouraging our Obedience to his Laws, *Matth.* 11. 28, 29, 30. *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. Take my Yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meak and lowly in heart; and ye ſhall find reſt unto your Souls: for my yoke is eaſie, and my burden is light.* Now this is the Love of God in particular, that we keep (even all) his Commandments; and his Commandments are not grievous, but undoubtedly very delightful, eaſie and pleaſant to the faithful obedient Lovers of God and Chriſt:

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in meekneſs and humility, overcoming the World hereby, 1 *John* 5. 3, 4, 5, *And transforming themſelves* (thro' the Holy Spirit of Love) *by the renewing of mind, to prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*, Rom. 12. 2. Who would not thus Conſcientiouſly and Zealouſly diſcharge all his reſpective Duties to God, himſelf, and his Neighbour: as firſt, in the Religious Exerciſes of *Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, Acts 20. 21. Of Devout Praiſe and Prayer: of Holineſs; Publick and Private Worſhip; Reverence of all things Sacred; Decent and Orderly Attendance upon the Divine Ordinances; the Solemn Adminiſtrations of his Word, and Sacraments; which our Excellent Church moſt Piouſly Enjoyns, and Celebrates. Secondly, Exerciſing Sobriety of Mind and Body, in Spiritual Meekneſs, Courage and Temperance; to reſiſt the Devil, ſubdue the Fleſh, and vanquiſh all the Terrors and the Flatteries, the Provocations, Dangers, and Temptations of a malicious World; compleating thoſe victorious Graces and Duties of Patience, Modeſty, Self-denial, Mortification, taking up the Croſs, and with the moſt glorious Paſſive Valour following the Captain of our Salvation even through a Sea of Blood, *Rom* 8. 37. becoming *more than Conquerors*, in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Thirdly, In Righteous Exerciſes of Juſtice, and Mercy to all Mankind. Which Charity, *the very bond of Peace*, and of all Vertues, *Eph.* 4. 3. Engages us all too, in that golden Rule of *do as we would be done by*, Matth. 7. 12. And ſtill endeavouring our utmoſt to live peaceably with all Men, *Rom.* 12. 7. Which, with ſolid Piety and Temperance, do only promote and ſecure the common Welfare of all. For what would the World be without theſe, but a Den of Thieves? All the orderly

Societies

Societies and Communities of Men, would (without a Metaphor) be so many Wild Beasts let loose upon one another; the strongest Preying upon the weakest, and they again, with the advantages of greater numbers retaliating the injury of the stronger: But where these Rules are Conscientiously practis'd, Mens Rights and Possessions are kept inviolate: The Poor are then favour'd and defended by the Rich; and they mutually aided and assisted by the Poor: And all things Administred in that Peace and Order, that constitutes a Regular and well-founded Government; which if any will venture to disturb, and to break the Peace; will dare to injure other Mens Persons, or invade their Properties, *&c.* the Sword of Justice (which the Magistrate is not to bear in vain) must be drawn upon such: Yea, to punish Malefactors, is both Justice and Mercy; wherein themselves can't complain of any wrong done them, when they receive their Reward, the just retribution of their own Demerits. Yet all due care must be taken of their Souls; and Repentance may plead for Pardon, as the Great Judge of the World so mercifully condescends to the vilest Sinner.

Thus Rulers are ordain'd of God, with an irresistable Power, *Rom.* 13. 1. to suppress the Wicked, and protect the Righteous; to Condemn the Guilty, and Absolve the Innocent. But woe to those that do otherwise, *Prov.* 17. 15. *Isa.* 10. 12. Now this is the Blessing of all Good Government; as particularly *to right the Poor, the Fatherless, and the Widow*; and what is all this, but reasonable Charity; and *to do as we would be done by*? Even so, are we

we juſtly oblig'd to ſpeak and act without guile; to be True, Sincere, Upright, and Honeſt in all our ways, and dealings, for our common Welfare and Felicity. The longeſt day has a night, and the moſt continu'd Serenity a full Period; in which Storm and Tempeſt, Darkneſs and Horror ſucceed. The uncertain variety of Man's Condition, makes the Application very eaſie and natural. The longeſt Felicity upon Earth is but ſhort-liv'd, and never fails to meet with an interruption at laſt. And in what a wretched condition were the beſt and ſtrongeſt of us all, if left to our ſelves in our Calamities; if God had not made Compaſſion a natural Inclination, as well as a Law: if Mens Conſciences had learn'd no ſuch Language as Pity; if there were no Springs in Nature to ſtir up our Affections, not only to Commiſerate, but to be Helpful and Aſſiſtant to one another, I ſay, without an Obligation to this Vertue, we ſhould be left alone to ſtruggle with thoſe Diſeaſes, which we often find enough for our ſelves and our Friends; and be forſook by our Neighbours in the greateſt Extremities of Oppreſſion, Poverty or Sickneſs, as the wounded Deer is abandon'd by the Herd. So for Temperance and Chaſtity, what can be better Calculated to ſerve the Intereſts, and provide for the Safety of Mankind? Which is notoriouſly evident from the diſmal inconveniencies that Exceſs and Debauchery bring upon Men. Shortneſs of Life, and Rottenneſs of Bones, Pains and Aches, Diſeaſes and Infirmities are the conſtant attendants upon the conſtant breach of theſe Commandments; which to practiſe with the reſt, upon this Principle of Univerſal Charity, is certainly more eaſie and pleaſant, and more becoming Rational Souls and Chriſtians, than all the contrary Vices and Tranſactions.

Wherefore, in love to God, ſhould we abominate all manner of Prophaneneſs, Irreligion, Perjury, and Sacrelige: In Charity to our ſelves, ſhould we avoid all manner of Intemperance and Uncleanneſs, Pride, Vanity, and Hypocriſie: And in Charity to our Neighbour, ſhould we abhor all manner of Injuſtice, and Unmerciſulneſs, Malice, Detraction, and Covetouſneſs, the Root of all Evil, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. Thus a Charitable Diſpoſition will eſchew evil, and do good: Seek Peace with God and Man, and enſue it, 1 *Pet.* 3. 11. will ever encreaſe it ſelf in all Godlineſs, and find it truly profitable unto all things, as it hath the promiſe both of this life, and of that which is to come, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. Thus is every thing good and happy included in Charity: Charity the immediate Off-ſpring of Heaven, Man's *ſummum bonum*, the Fountain of all Goodneſs and Felicity; the Joy of Angels, and Glory of Men: Now, who wouldnot thus (with Love it ſelf) go about doing good, *Acts* 10. 38. whatever he may ſuffer for the ſame; when God muſt be obeyed, rather than Man, *Act.* 4. 19. *&c.* wherein Love knows no Difficulties, nor fears any Tribulations. He that is made perfect in Love, being free from all diſtracting Cares, Worldly Anxieties, or ſervile tormenting Fears, 1 *Joh.* 4. 18. Love ſecures him in the Pious Filial fear of God alone; and to make him undoubtedly perſiſt (with his loving Favour) in all well-doing, and contented ſuffering. Following his ſteps as call'd thereunto, 1 *Pet.* 21. as in caſes of Perſecution, happy are they that ſuffer for Chriſt's, or Righteouſneſs ſake, *Mat.* 5. tho' it is not our Love and Obedience, but others Hatred and Diſobedience, that does us any miſchief thereupon. For all Chriſt's Love and Commandments are not only conſiſtent with, but pro-

productive of the common Peace and Good of Mankind, and therefore, if all Men would unanimouſly obey his Goſpel, as they ought, then no body could ever ſuffer by it. However, is it not more commendable, and glorious to ſuffer patiently for well-doing than evil doing in any caſe whatever, 1 *Pet.* 2. 19, 20. and will not Charity rejoyce exceedingly in being revil'd, and perſecuted for Conſcience ſake; and even Bleſs and Pray for all its Slanderers, Enemies, and Perſecutors; when ſo great a Bleſſedneſs as the Kingdom of Heaven will be the Reward, and everlaſting Glory Crowns the Martyr, *Matth.* 5. 10, 11, 12. Nay, who would not (upon any account) even through many Tribulations, enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, *Acts* 14. 22. When all, who thus love their God and Saviour, are aſſur'd of enjoying that Myſterious endleſs Bliſs and Happineſs in the Beatifical Viſion; which can neither be ſeen, expreſs'd, nor conceiv'd on this ſide Heaven, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. as thoſe Charitable Perſons ſhall be pronounc'd Bleſſed, in the laſt General Aſſize of all, by our great Lord and Judge himſelf, and joyfully admitted into that Kingdom prepar'd for them, where Charity hath *fed the Hungry, cloathed the Naked, viſited the Sick*, &c. *Matth.* 25. 34, 35, 36. hath reliev'd the Oppreſs'd, and redeem'd the poor Captive and Priſoner, whether Friend or Enemy. This is Generous and God-like, thus to love Mercy. This is preferr'd before Sacrifice, by our Divine Law-giver; and this with the Acts of Juſtice and Piety, (inſtead of all the coſtly laborious Services and Sacrifices of Nature) God hath ſhewed thee, O Man, to be good under the Old Law, *Mic.* 6. 8. as thus the Goſpel teacheth us to deny Ungodlineſs, and Worldly Luſts; and to live Soberly, Righteouſly, and Godlily in this preſent

World; looking for that bleſſed Hope and Glorious appearing of the Great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; who will then receive us into the Arms of Eternal Love; who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purifie unto himſelf a peculiar People, Zealous of Good Works. Now theſe things we moſt Charitably teach and exhort, and (as we may too) rebuke with all Authority; and let no Man deſpiſe us, for thus the Love and Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, *Tit.* 2. 11. to the end.

So I come in the third and laſt place, to manifeſt ſome grand Obligations to the due practice hereof, but very briefly, from the points of Duty, Gratitude, and Intereſt; which in other things determine our Choice, and Reſolution. As theſe are main Topicks of Perſuaſion, great Motives to Action, and high Encouragements to Perſeverance againſt all Difficulties and Obſtacles in the way. So much more ſhould they be to us, in our Charitable endeavours, in this our Chriſtian Race and Warfare.

1ſt. Then, we are bound in Duty to the Religious practice of this excellent Catholick Charity, becauſe 'tis ſtrictly enjoin'd us by the Higheſt, *i. e.* the Divine Authority, from whence all Human Power is deriv'd. This is poſitively requir'd of us by our Lord, who hath moſt Right to our Love and Obedience upon our Creation, Redemption, and continual Preſervation: which do,

2dly. Oblige us in Gratitude to the ſame; tho' we are farther bound in Duty upon our Baptiſmal Covenant, and Liſting our ſelves under Chriſt's Banner againſt Sin, the World,

World, and the Devil; which obliges us in Conſcience and Honour to continue his faithful Soldiers to our lives end, and not cowardly Debaſe our ſelves, or Diſhonour him by Diſobedience, and Neglect of his Almighty Power, like the Reviling Blaſphemous Jews, who thus Crucify'd the Lord of Life. All Sin is contagious in its own Nature, but nothing more ſo, than diſreſpect to Superiors; as 'tis notoriouſly plain, that the World is apt to follow Example more than Reaſon in this caſe. So fatal to others, as to our ſelves, will be our Treacherous, Rebellious Diſobedience. As nothing can be more Diſhonorable, Miſchievous, and Ungrateful, which proceeds from that Earthly, Senſual, Deviliſh Wiſdom, mention'd *James* 3. 15. not regarding the true Wiſdom from above (ſo full of this Exceſſive, Univerſal Charity, the very Temper of Heaven, the Image of the Divinity) which is firſt Pure, then Peaceable, Gentle, and Eaſie to be intreated; full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocriſie; and the Fruit of Righteouſneſs is ſown in Peace, of them that make Peace, *v.* 17. 18. which,

3dly, Shews our Obligations upon Intereſt, Peace Internal, External, and Eternal, flowing from this Principle of Charity, is our only real Happineſs, and conſequently our only true Intereſt. Thus for inſtance, the truely Charitable Perſon (beyond all the greateſt Heroes of the World) is Maſter of himſelf, has conquer'd his Paſſions and corrupt Affections; humbled his Soul before God, and caſt out all Devils by Faſting and Prayer; is Regenerate and Spiritualiz'd; renders to all their dues; is as faithful to God and his Church, or his Miniſters, as to *Cæſar* and the State, *Matth.* 17. 21. *c.* 22. *v.* 21. Wrongs no

no Man, does good to all, especially the Houshold of Faith; owes no Man any thing but Love, *Gal.* 6. 10. *Rom.* 13. 8. provides for his own, and uses Hospitality, 2 *Tim.* 5. 8. 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. depends upon Grace and Providence; submits patiently and thankfully to the Divine Will in all things; trusts in the Merits of his Saviour, and who obtains his blessed Legacy of Peace, *Joh.* 14. 17. *c.* 16. So is he secure from the Strokes either of Justice, or Violence. None but a Tyrant, or Villain indeed, would injure such a Person, who (as one truly speaks) is so far from the Designs of Dishonesty, *&c.* that his hands are oblig'd to be employ'd in Charity; and so far from exasperating others by unruly Provocations, that his very Enemies may expect (because they must have) his Love; and those that curse him, his Prayers, *Matth.* 5. 44.

Thus his Life is safe from the Stroke of Justice, and Injustice too, if Christianity might be admitted to represent unto the Russian the Obligation that she lays on her Disciples to affront no Man. However, if Barbarity prevails, he knows to whom Vengeance belongeth, and he is not overcome of Evil, but overcomes Evil with Good, *Rom.* 12. 19. 21. And if he can't heap Coals of Fire on his Enemy's Head, to melt him by Charity into Love and Compassion, if Love will not beget Love in his hardened Heart; yet (after the Example of our dying Lord) he will charitably forgive, and interceed for his very Murtherers, *Luke* 23. 34. So he bears good Will to, and is in Charity with his most inveterate Foes, as he can't be an Enemy to any, but is always a Friend and Benefactor to Mankind in general, by good Wishes and Prayers at least, where 'tis not in his Power to act; thus charitable may the poorest be. So farther, he enjoys the continual

continual Feaſt of a good Conſcience, and the Bleſſed Peace of Mind both in Time of Adverſity and Proſperity; having plac'd his Treaſure, and ſet his Heart and Affections upon things above and not below, *Col.* 3. 1, 2. avoiding the Snares and Temptations of Riches, by doing good with them, 2 *Tim.* 6. 9, 17, 18, 19. And being aſſur'd of God's Protection, and Bleſſing upon the due Improvement of his Talents in Love and Fidelity; knowing that he ſhall not be tempted above that he is able, but in all Trials ſhall happily eſcape, 1 *Cor.* 10 13. So in the midſt of Storms and Tempeſts, Croſſes and Afflictions, Wars and Deſolations, he remains unmov'd like an invincible Rock upon ſtedfaſt Faith, and Hope in the God of his Love, *Pſal.* 46. Who will certainly deliver him from all Evil, the Evil of Sin and Puniſhment here, and hereafter; as in all time of Tribulation, in all time of Wealth, in the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment, when he'll be receiv'd into the Joy of his Lord, *Matth.* 25. Which now ſufficiently manifeſts our Obligations upon Intereſt, as well as Duty and Gratitude, to exerciſe this Chriſtian Charity, or comprehenſive Love in full obſervance of the Divine Commandments; which is the only demonſtration of our Love to Chriſt, that he will accept of: For he only that hath his Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth him, *Joh.* 14. 21. If therefore (as now by way of Chriſtian Application) we find this effect in our Actions, we may be ſure the Cauſe is within our Hearts: But if this alone be wanting, all our Pretences to Chriſtianity are vain; yea, all other Offices of Religion, our Prayers, our Repentance, our Confidence our Faſting, our Alms, are no manner of Arguments of

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our Love of God, and Christ, because they are not used as means to this end, which alone can give them the denomination of Religious Actions; which plainly signifies the vast difference between Real and Nominal Christians, between the faithful and pretended Lovers of Christ, who are all known by their Fruits, *Matth.* 7. 15. If there were no other way to judge of the Reality of Mens Affections, than the Greatness of their own Pretences, there might not be devis'd a more impertinent waste of time, than in a Christian Congregation to endeavour to perswade Men to love their God and Saviour. We call our selves Christians after his Name; we build Churches for his Worship; where we often appear, as on this day, with bended Knees, and lift up hands to send up our Prayers and Praises to him; if we may be believ'd, we hate them that hate him, as tho' they were our Enemies: We fight his Battles, and propagate his Religion with the hazard of our Lives: We hate not only his Enemies, but even our own Friends and Relations for his sake. Our Saviour's Prophecy (*Luk.* 12. 51. to 54.) has been notoriously verify'd through the Christian World; and as much as any-where in this unhappy Kingdom, where the pretended Love of Christ, and his Religion has set Father against Son, Brother against Brother, *&c. Ver.* 53. And this has taken such entire Possession of our Affections, that has sadly crowded out all Charity for one another.

But none of these Pretences are sufficient Proofs of our Love of Christ; nay, some are the greatest Arguments against it. For take it how we will, he that pretends to love God, and hates his Brother, is justly pronounced a Lyar, 1 *Joh.* 4. 20. And it holds not only in the case before-

fore-nam'd, but in all other Inſtances whatever, where our Pretences to the Love of Chriſt are not ſeconded, and made out by an entire Obedience to his Commands, as himſelf requires, *Joh.* 14. 15, 21. *Eph.* 1. Moreover, what an impudent Affront is it to him, and contradiction in themſelves, for the Subjects of the Prince of Peace to be contentious and bloody; as for the Diſciples of the holy and immaculate Jeſus to be prophane and impure; yea, as too many are, worſe than all other People and Nations: So *Chriſtendom* is too fatally become the vileſt part of the World, a Sink of all thoſe Abominations, which even *Barbarians* deteſt. O the Horror, and Miſery! Thus is Chriſt ſmitten in the Houſe of his Friends; crucify'd by his Votaries; his ſeamleſs Coat divided by his Diſciples; his Spouſe the Church's Bowels torn out by her own Sons; Chriſtianity deſtroy'd by its baſe uncharitable Profeſſors, and the Goſpel ſubverted by furious pretended Zealots, whoſe Condemnation will be the heavier: *Whoſe Judgment now of a long time lingreth not, and their Damnation ſlumbreth not*: For *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of Temptations, and to reſerve the Unjuſt unto the day of Judgment to be puniſhed*; as chiefly the Unclean, and Rebellious, the Preſumptuous and Self-will'd, that fear not *to ſpeak Evil of Dignities*, 2 Pet. 2. to v. 11. Among thoſe damnable Hereticks, who even deny the Lord that bought them, and ſo bring upon themſelves ſwift Deſtruction, 2 *Pet.* 2. to *v.* 11, and ſo to the end. All which proceeds from the want of this ſolid Principle of real Love, or operative Charity.

Wherein how easie soever 'tis to deceive others, and what's more our selves, into an Opinion that we love Christ, *&c.* when at the same time we do nothing less; or how dexterously soever we can put the Cheat upon the World, and get the Name of Religious, at so cheap a rate as the Trouble of a well dissembled Hypocrisie, *&c.* yet Christ sees the Heart, and will not be impos'd upon. God will not be mocked, *Gal.* 6. 7. Neither will all their Professions, or Devotions, save such Workers of Iniquity. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven,* Matth. 7. 21. And, Luk. 6. 46. *Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* So was he revil'd by his Crucifiers.

But what Lord, or Governor, what Parent, or Master, would endure such heinous Mockeries, and daring Contradictions? Can we think then that the great King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, will bear with the Contradictions of Sinners against himself forever? No certainly, unless they repent, and amend, and resolve to do his Will in Love; which must be our principal, if not only Motive to Obedience: Otherwise, 'tis no Argument that we love him, if we do it not for his sake who requires it: And because there can be no other Reason given of our Saviour's requiring this Instance of our Love, but as 'tis the Effect of that Cause. If therefore any By-end, or Self-Interest (such as the getting a Reputation in the World, the driving on of secular Designs, or Worldly Advantages by that means) be the end of our compliance with Christ's Commands: He has no reason at all

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to look upon it as any Argument of our Affection to him, or to reward it as ſuch: 'Tis Carnal, or Worldy Policy, and not Religion: 'Tis the Love of Our ſelves, and not of Chriſt. And as its Motives are Worldly, ſo will its Rewards be. Such a Man has nothing elſe to expect for a Retribution of ſuch Services, but to attain in the end that for which they were perform'd; namely, vain Popularity, and humane Applauſe. And to what wretched purpoſe has ſuch a Man been at the Pains to keep the Commandments, who has thus literally labour'd for the Wind. As he is no leſs faulty, whoſe Obedience is Peacemeal and Partial. For he that offends in one point, is guilty of all, *James* 2. 10.

Charity is Univerſal, and 'tis this grand Principle which is ſignified in all this Diſcourſe, this pure Chriſtian Love, which will ſurely Direct, Regulate, and Compleat our Obedience, and Happineſs. Wherefore let us practice accordingly; and then God will reward ſuch Love both with Temporal and Eternal Bleſſings, as the Scriptures abundantly teſtifies. *God ſheweth mercy unto thouſands of them that love him, and keep his Commandments*, Exod. 20. 6. he keepeth Covenant and Mercy for them that love him, and obſerve his Commandments, *Neh.* 1. 5. the Lord preſerveth all them that love him, *Pſal.* 145. 20. and we know, that all things works together for good to them that love God, *Rom.* 8. 28. the ſame are known of him, 1 *Cor.* 8. 3. are without fear, and may have boldneſs in the day of Judgment, 1 *Joh.* 4. 18, 19. The Lord hath promiſed a Crown of Life, and a Kingdom to to them that love him, *Jam.* 1. 12. *c.* 2. 5. and hath prepared glorious Manſions, inviſible Joys in Heaven for

thoſe that love him, *Joh.* 14. 2. 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. *Take good heed therefore unto your ſelves, that ye love the Lord your God*, Joſh. 23. 11. and in Love let each one, both high and low, make *Joſhua's* Pious Reſolution, *c.* 24. 15. *As for me and my Houſe, we will ſerve the Lord*: Which how can we Chriſtians refuſe, upon conſideration of the Divine, Infinite, Unparallel'd Love to us? God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, in whoſe Name we are Baptiz'd, *Matth.* 28. 19. Thoſe ever Bleſſed Sacred Three in One, who bear Record in Heaven, having ſo exceedingly, lov'd us, and left us United Witneſs on Earth in the Spiritual Miniſtry of his Word and Sacraments, 1 *Joh.* 5. 7 8. all teſtifying our Redemption by the Son of Love, *v.* 9, *&c.* that only begotten and well-beloved Eternal Son, the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon, by whom all things were made, and whom all the Angels of God do Worſhip, *Heb.* 1. 1, 2, *&c.* that ever-living Word, Wiſdom, and God manifeſt in our Fleſh, who thus alone could ſatisfie infinite Juſtice for us, *Joh.* 1. 1, *&c.* 1 *Cor.* 1. 24, 30. 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. He reliev'd us in our moſt forlorn Condition and remedileſs Miſery. He, beyond all the inſtances of endearing vertuous Friendſhip; beyond all the Examples of Mankind, ſtept in between the juſt Indignation of the Judge and the Condemned, by ſubſtituting his Perſon in their ſtead, and ſuffering the Execution of the diſmal Sentence to them. He deſcended from the Throne of Heaven, Miraculouſly aſſuming Human Nature, freely offering himſelf a Sacrifice, and ſo died for his very Enemies, by intolerable Tortures, and by the moſt Ignominious, Shameful and Accurſed Death. He underwent all the Reproach and Shame, all the bitter Penalties due to Malefactors,

Malefactors, by his own voluntary Act and free Choice, from no other Motive, and for no other end, but his own Love, and for the eternal Welfare of thoſe wretched Miſcreants, who, as he well knew, already had, and together with their Poſterity for ever, would be repeated Tranſgreſſions of the moſt equitable Laws, ungratefully provoke him and his Father.

Here is Charity compleatly admirable, moſt ſingular and unutterable. O what Tongue of Men or Angels can expreſs, what Heart can conceive the unfathomable depth of this unparall'd Loving-kindneſs! Thus he died for our Sins, and roſe again for our Juſtification; and now liveth to make Interceſſion for us, reigneth for ever our Mighty Prince and Saviour adorable by all; and will come again in Glory to Judge, and Reward all according to their Charity, *Ma.* 25. *Rom.* 4. 25. *Heb.* 7. 25. *Acts* 5. 31. *Matth.* 16. 27 Now what returns of Love can we make him? What Obedience ought we to pay him, who has ſo greatly Merited, even Purchas'd us with his own Blood, and laid ſuch irrequitable Obligations upon us? Who has ſo wonderfully wrought our Redemption, and reſcu'd us from the juſt Vengeance of his offended Father, into a ſtate of Grace and Reconciliation with him, and poſſibility of being certainly happy with him and his Father in another World.

Which (now laſtly) is a thing of ſo mighty concernment to us, that but for that alone, we had better never have been born; and the greateſt Proſperity of this World could ſignifie no more to our Happineſs, than the fatal Finery of thoſe poor Beaſts which the Heathens put upon them before the Sacrifice. The Frailty and Mortality

lity of our Natures; those cruel Legions of Diseases Death keeps in pay against us, the instability of our Fortunes, and uncertainty of all Conditions upon Earth; with the frequent Diseases and fatal Revolutions attending the most flourishing States; and the fading Vanity of all Sublunary things, may really cause the Great *Solomon's Vexation of Spirit*, Eccl. and embitter all our Felicities here, or rather our Mockeries and Shadows of Happiness. Nay, upon other Considerations moreover, profess wisely the true Christians with St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 19. *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.* But now the assurances which his Death and Resurrection give us of a future state of Immortal Love and Bliss, may well encourage and oblige our constant unlimited Charity; and let *nothing separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Rom. 8. 35. 39. So I conclude with one of our Churches most Comprehensive, Excellent *Collects*, for this.

O Lord God, who hast taught us, that all our Doings without Charity, are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our Hearts that most Excellent Gift of Charity, the very Bond of Peace, and of all Vertues; without which whosoever liveth, is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ his sake: To whom three Persons and one God be ascrib'd, as is most due, all Adoration, Love, Glory and Power in Heaven and Earth for ever, Amen.

FINIS.

Bonum quo communius, eo melius.

Errata in

Page ye 7th, line ye 22nd; read clear.

P: 8. l: 14. r: slain.

P: 11. l: 27. r: doing.

P: 13. l: 18. r: disasters. & l: 32. r: transgressions.

P: 14. l: 25. r: undauntedly. & l: 26. r: Saviour.

P: 15. l: 21. r: whose.

P: 25. l: 5. r: by.

P: 26. l: 4. r: disasters.